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SUBJECT: SERBIA: 2008 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 120019

¶1. (U) Serbia's law enforcement and security agencies, particularly the Customs Administration, Criminal Police, Border Police, Security Information Agency, and other security services, greatly increased bilateral counterterrorism cooperation since the July formation of the new government. Intra-governmental cooperation between these agencies also improved, increasing their effectiveness. Serbia had two police organizations that operated as counterterrorism tactical response units, the Special Antiterrorist Unit and the Counterterrorist Unit. In addition, the government created a Criminal Investigative Unit for Counterterrorist Investigation within the Interior Ministry's Criminal Investigation Directorate.

¶2. (U) The United States provided counterterrorism training and assistance to the Serbian government. The International Criminal Investigative Assistance Training Program's Organized Crime Advisor (ICITAP) conducted a counterterrorism workshop for Serbian and Montenegrin police officers in Montenegro in May. The workshop covered trends in international terrorism, the formation of a Joint Terrorist Task Force, investigative techniques, vulnerability assessments, crime scene management, case studies, and practical exercise problems. ICITAP also conducted two informant development courses for Serbian anti-terrorism police officers in January and November. In January, ICITAP donated a special forces boat to the Special Antiterrorism Unit. The Defense Threat Reduction Agency conducted two multi-agency counterterrorism and weapons of mass destruction counterproliferation courses in June and November. The Department of State provided training to the police through the Antiterrorism Assistance Program. The Export Control and Border Security Program (EXBS) provided weapons of mass destruction detection equipment and training, as well as training in detecting illicit radioactive materials and chemical trafficking, to the Border Police, Customs, and prosecutorial and licensing authority agencies. In conjunction with the Departments of Homeland Security and Energy, EXBS provided other courses in undercover operations, export control, and dual use commodity identification to Border Police, Customs, and police investigative, prosecutorial, and licensing authority agencies. EXBS also provided technical expertise to the Ministry of International Economic Relations in licensing and commodity identification.

¶3. (U) The fact that Serbia has not yet ratified the bilateral Weapons of Mass Destruction Agreement, signed in 2006, prevented the duty free import and donation of a significant amount of equipment that could be used to counter terrorism.

¶4. (U) A bill on terrorist financing, now pending Parliamentary approval, will apply all provisions of the Anti-Money Laundering Law to terrorist financing. It will require reporting of transactions suspected to be terrorist financing and will create mechanisms for freezing, seizing, and confiscating suspected terrorist assets.

¶5. (U) The trial of 14 Islamic fundamentalists charged with conspiracy to commit unconstitutional activity, terrorism, illegal possession of firearms, and attempted murder commenced in April. Authorities found evidence that the group was planning attacks on infrastructure in the city of Novi Pazar, a local religious leader, and several sites in Belgrade, including the U.S. Embassy. Authorities charged an additional four persons with planning an attack on the Novi Pazar police in March.

¶6. (U) Embassy point of contact is Bianca Menendez,  
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